4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

Even this kind of trouble is mild enough. It is more serious when the pupil accuses his master in the Chinese court, alleging that living with his master is impossible, and demanding a part of his wealth. Such impudent acts of audacity happen from time to time. I asked the subprefects of Tat'ung and Nien-pei, and the Amban, about the reasons given for such accusations. All three told me, "Father, you do not know the secrets of the monasteries. The alleged reasons are always, in the long run, the same as those used by the daughters-in-law when they accuse their fathers-in-law."

A lama cannot stand having such accusations put on public display by an unscrupulous pupil who aims at getting hold of his wealth, for even if he wins the suit, his entire wealth has vanished. The pupil knows perfectly well how much his master is worth, and tells the officials and the underlings of the court how much they can expect to benefit. Such a suit makes the court happy. An intelligent lama, therefore, always tries to invite influential people to mediate the quarrel and to work out an agreement, consenting to give up a part of his fortune and to separate from the pupil. The lama can then begin again with another pupil, while he still has something to his name.

The life of a lama is not a bed of roses. Even if he should be an affluent individual, insecurity over the attitude of his uneducated pupil, fears of having the pupil accuse him at the Chinese courts, and the possibility of losing his fortune, must always hover in the background.

The life of the pupil is not a bed of roses either.[6] Not having received any real religious education, having no serious occupation, living a lazy life, the prospect of having to serve, who knows for how many years, a master who is becoming old and has many weaknesses and imperfections, is not alluring. On the other hand, being in the prime of life, used to engaging in domestic duties, enjoying the company of young people of dubious behavior, the pupil is not disposed to dedicate all his energy to study and devote himself entirely to a perfect monastic life.

These seemed to be the conditions prevailing between masters and pupils in the monasteries of Huang-chung in 1910–1920, which became evident after observing the lama life at close quarters for several years.

THE IDEAL MONGUOR LAMA IN HUANG-CHUNG

It was always very interesting to inquire, among well-acquainted, serious lamas, and among young pupils, how a "good" lama behaved the whole day long. The answers given are summed up in the following statement, bearing evidences of a long-standing tradition and of a general uniformity in the concept of a "model," or "ideal" lama.

In the very early morning the master awakens his

[6] Rynhart, *op. cit.*, 129, 130, 131.

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4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

pupil, who prepares tea. He presents a cup of tea to his master and enjoys one with him. In the winter he kindles the brazier. Then he sweeps the courtyard while his master rises. He brings him a basin of hot water, so that he may wash his face. He wipes the dust from the house altar and the furniture, and prepares the ritual tea to be offered before the Buddha image (a yellow powder consisting of several kinds of pounded roots mixed with water). The master fills the brass cups, displayed in a row before the image, taking care not to spill a single drop outside the cup. Master and pupil recite the ritual prayer, prostrating themselves as long as the prayer lasts. Fervent lamas are accustomed to make 108 prostrations with their pupil. Everyone assured me that this is really hard work, especially in wintertime.

After the ritual the pupil empties the brass cups, pouring out the ritual tea in the courtyard in a place assumed to be clean, and cleans the cups. About this time the conches are blown and the drums beaten in the central assembly hall, and master and pupil go to attend the morning ceremony. They then come back to their quarters, and, after driving the oxen and horses to pasture, the pupil places the text book on the lap of his master and then with his back turned to the master recites the lesson indicated for that day. If he fails, the master inflicts corporal punishment and fixes the lesson for the next day. The pupil then prepares breakfast, after which he goes out to collect fuel. He is back at noon in order to serve tea and tsamba to his master. The ritual tea is offered again before the images, with prostrations, and the pupil, free for the whole afternoon, is then allowed to relax with his friends outside the monastery. He has to be back by the time the sun is as high as two posts, in order to prepare the evening meal of noodles and tea, which the master enjoys sitting on the k'ang while his pupil squats on the floor. After the kitchen chores are finished and the animals tended, the pupil starts memorizing texts for the next morning. When it is time to go to bed, a last and third ritual tea is offered, with prostrations, before the image on the house altar, and master and pupil sleep next to each other on the k'ang. A pupil is never allowed to go to bed before his master.

During the long winter nights, in order to have an idea of the time, the good lamas fix three sticks of incense, end to end. To the third stick is attached a thread with copper coins. This device is suspended above a basin. When the third stick has burned down, the thread with the coins falls into the basin. The lama awakes and kindles a new series of three sticks of incense. He repeats this process a third time. When the coins fall for the third time the pupil is awakened and he starts the day's chores as before. If it happens that, when master and pupil are ready to attend the morning ceremony, the dawn is still some way off, they return to their slumbers; but if it is at hand they must, ac-

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cording to the rules, occupy the time in meditation or prayer. 792 157

A good lama should daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, walk around the monastery saying his beads and prostrating himself at the small shrines along the ritual way. In the fourth moon he makes the same round, prostrating himself the whole way along. This is said to be really exhausting work.

Every year a good lama enters a retreat at home for two weeks. He does not leave his room, talks with no one, and cancels all appointments with visitors. He prays and reads texts the whole day and offers the ritual tea four times daily before the image. A good lama never sits on a bench or chair, but always squats [516] cross-legged on the floor or the k'ang, barefooted, his clothes adjusted decently. He eats only mutton, beef, or pork, never the meat of the horse, donkey, hare, or [262] chicken, or fish or eggs. Lamas are not allowed to raise sheep, goats, pigs, chickens, or donkeys. A model lama lives in retirement, avoiding mixing with the groups of lamas who play chess and cards all night, or indulge in endless gossip, or tell smutty jokes and indecent stories, for the saying goes that "nothing is dirtier than the tongue of a lama." A good lama deals with books with reverence, putting them, wrapped in a yellow silk scarf, before the Buddha statues, carrying them on his back when traveling. A good lama does not even go to say prayers at private homes, when invited by the people; he does not leave the monastery.

These notes, given by older lamas and young Wendees, reveal what lamas think about an ideal lama and what sort of ideal is held up before young lamas. However, in order to be able to become an "ideal lama" some wealth is required, or at least an honorable competency, and it is precisely the lack of this primary condition which provides the clue to most of the miseries of individual lamas and the ruin of many monasteries.

HOW LAMAS PROVIDE FOR THEIR SUBSISTENCE

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Lamas have to earn a living, because support furnished by the monastery is insufficient. Poor lamas try to find a full-time job in the several intendancies of the monastery or with the minor Living Buddhas, or by accompanying expeditions to collect alms, or by working in the printing offices. Many find a part-time [446] job carrying water every day for several rich lamas, driving animals to the pasture grounds and then back home again, selling cow dung and fuel. Lamas like to be hired, by a lama whose pupil has abandoned him, to search for and bring back the strayed pupil. Lamas try to buy a young, nicely built horse or mule, and are happy to hire young lamas who will work every day at breaking it to the saddle, in order that they will be able to sell it in the cities or in Lhasa, where such animals command a good price. Lamas

4: Schram M-S (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

gram of studies, elaborately built up and highly vaunted, and the knowledge and education sometimes attributed to the lamas in Tibet and Mongolia. My opinions seem to be justified by the opinions of other authors, who have lived for years among the lamas, knowing their language and being themselves Buddhists. 792 873 794

The learned Buddhist, Mme Alexandra David-Neel, who lived in the lamaseries of Tibet and Huang-chung for many years, knew the language very well and was always sympathetic to the lamas, giving "philosophical" justifications for much questionable behavior, but she confesses: 792 157 829

> At the morning exercise are intermixed subtle philosophy with commercialism, high spirituality with feverish pursuit of vile satisfactions, which are impossible to separate from each other; novices, educated in this whirlpool of contrary influences, follow one or another of them, according to their nature and the direction given to them by their master.[14] In Tibet the clerical education has produced only a "small number" of selected literary men, a "large number" of slothful brutes, joyous, gay fellows, and picturesque blusterers, and all these various characteristics, if they do not show up in every lama, are at least "simultaneously deeply ingrained in the nature of all of them."[15]

Kawaguchi, a learned Japanese Buddhist monk, who went to Lhasa to study Lamaism in the learned centers of Tibet, states that they graduate from the college after having studied for twenty-one years; they study especially the Buddhist Catechism and philosophy. They are from thirty to thirty-six years of age when they graduate.[16] It may safely be said that their purpose in entering the priesthood is only to procure the largest possible amount of fortune as well as the highest possible fame in that entirely secluded world of theirs. They do not seek religious truths or practice religious austerities for the work of delivering men and leading them to salvation, but they study to acquire fame, wealth, and influence, and there is nothing deep in their religious life, and 999 out of 1,000 have no conception of the problems of future life.[17] He states also that their faith is a veritable mass of superstition.[18]

These two learned Buddhists seem to confirm my suspicions and to reveal the philosophy and the behavior of the lama institutions. They corroborate my own observations, made at various institutions during the same span of time. A single fact may account only for the mentality of a single man; a multitude of facts, however, reveal the mentality of an entire corporation.[19] [123]

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[14] Alexandra David-Neel, *Mystiques et magiciens du Tibet*, 95.

[15] David-Neel, *op. cit.*, 96.

[16] Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three years in Tibet*, 291, Adyar, Madras, Japan, 1909.

[17] *Ibid.*, 348.

[18] *Ibid.*, 560.

[19] Vreeland, *op. cit.*, 108, *sq.*, gives interesting comparative data concerning the lamas and their behavior in the lamaseries situated in the Gobi Desert in the Narobanchin territory.

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even minor Living Buddhas live in luxurious residences, with a private chapel and servants. Admittance to the Living Buddha is very complicated; no one is even allowed to enter the kitchen, at the entrance of which, when the Living Buddha is present, is a high stone, whitewashed and covered with a ceremonial scarf.

The first duty of the intendant is to acquire for his new master two lama teachers of good repute and extensive learning, in order to provide for the education of the pupil. The first lessons consist of training the boy, grooming him for a big throne, to handle the protocol, as one to the manner born. The new pupil, clad in shining garments of embroidered silk, has to learn again and again to proceed with a stately, measured tread to his throne, which is draped with silk of royal yellow; to sit down gracefully, adjusting his clothes decently, and wearing a professional smile. He has to be trained by constant repetition to handle with elegance the stick with tufted end, and with solemnity to touch with it the heads of adoring pilgrims, nodding his head at the same time and smiling with calmness and serenity.

An old master told me that it takes weeks and weeks before a pupil sits well in the saddle, and that after months and months the exercises always have to be repeated, because, he said, the dignity of the pupil and the repute of the master are involved. At the same time, he said, the teacher has to instill in the pupil the idea of the eminence of his state in life, to make him conscious that the people adore him and that he really can procure the salvation of all beings. He has to explain his illustrious pedigree in order to enhance in him the sense of his dignity.[25]

No wonder that travelers meeting Living Buddhas, particularly young Living Buddhas, are impressed by the serious omnipotent look on their faces. It is a common saying that all Orientals are born actors, and the joke is well known, "Dress a beggar with the clothes of a governor of a province, and he will immediately play his role to the peak of perfection." Living Buddhas, however, receive an intensive training.

The little Living Buddha then starts reading and writing, memorizing texts and repeating them before his masters, who inflict corporal punishment when he fails to measure up to their expectations. The master, after punishing the pupil, kneels before him and apologizes for having been compelled to mete out punishment to so eminent a Living Buddha. It would seem that Living Buddhas, like ordinary lamas, are not very interested in poring over books and racking their brains over philosophical problems. The last T'u-kuan, born in 1894, had two masters, one from Erh-ku-lung and one sent by his friend the Living Buddha of Labrang. The master from Labrang, after some years, gave up all hope of making a learned man of his pupil, and packed

[25] Schuyler Cammann, *The land of the camel*, 79, 80, 94, New York, Ronald Press, 1950. Rynhart, *op. cit.*, 127, 128.

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BEHAVIOR OF THE LIVING BUDDHAS OF HUANG-CHUNG

Some facts will explain this matter better than philosophical considerations. 792 276 691 157

In 1916 the Living Buddha of the monastery of Sha-ku-ssu (Yung ch'ang hsien), an old branch of Erh-ku-lung, was an inveterate opium addict and had ruined his monastery. In order to retrieve his financial position in an easy way, he called on the Living Buddha of the monastery of Nan-ying (Liang chou), saying that he remembered in all the minutest detail having loaned, five generations ago, to his honorable confrere of Nan-ying, three herds of horses, five of sheep, three of cows, and 300 taels, and that this debt had never been paid; because he was poor and his confrere rich he would like to have his confrere take care of the matter.

The answer of the equally shrewd confrere was that he did not at all remember such an enormous debt, although he remembered in all possible detail the events that had happened during five generations. Thereupon the living Buddha of Sha-ku-ssu brought suit against his confrere at the Court of Justice in Liang-chou, claiming that his confrere knew all about the question, but that his pathological craving for money made him throttle his conscience and commit this crying injustice. The confrere reciprocated along the same line, exposing the opium addict before the interested audience; but because in China a rich man must always give up some of his rights in favor of the poor, the rich Living Buddha was ordered to give ten horses, and his poor confrere was able to continue smoking his opium for some time. [696]

The reason alleged by the opium smoker should be well known among lamas and Living Buddhas. It was the same that was used by the Dalai Lama at Kumbum in 1909. In autumn he arrived at Kumbum with the traditional splendor of an Oriental potentate. Monguors, Tibetans, and Chinese ran to Kumbum to honor him. The Dalai Lama and his retinue were savage and arrogant; their animals were turned loose among the crops in the fields. Every day troubles arose over the sheep and flour offered by the mandarins, and the Dalai Lama, swayed by foolish pride and insolence, insisted on transferring three lama officials of Kumbum. Achia, defending his rights, denied the Dalai Lama permission to interfere with his administration of the lamasery. 792 157 578

The reason alleged by the Dalai Lama was that in one of his previous existences he remembered having been an incarnation of Achia and supreme chief of Kumbum. But Achia, without losing his balance, flatly denied the fact because he did not remember such an incarnation. Furthermore, he pointed out that the Dalai Lama was the incarnation of Tsong khapa, who was the incarnation of Chen-resig, while he himself was the incarnation of Tsong-khapa's father. He wondered how a son could behave so insolently and impudently

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toward his father, and he could not understand how the same individual could happen to be the incarnation of the father and the son. Then Achia talked to him like a father, telling him to be more circumspect and to behave more decently, for many tales were already spreading about his behavior with Tibetan women. Liberties of that kind, he said, outraging the Lamaist conventions, were not allowed at Kumbum. The lamas of Kumbum, breathing fire and brimstone, prepared their weapons and called together lamas of neighboring monasteries. The officials of Hsining (the Amban, the General, the tao-t'ai, and the prefect) were in a hurry, and went to Kumbum with troops in order to prevent a clash. Finally, in order to get rid of the Dalai Lama as fast as possible, they decided to let him appoint three lama officials and then to depose them after his departure. The Dalai Lama left, and the three appointed officials also left as quickly as possible for fear of being killed by the Kumbum lamas. The deposed officials assumed their jobs again, but Achia, deeming that he had irretrievably lost face, cut his throat. Several times I heard this tragic story, told by the Amban himself and by the officials at Kumbum.

The Dalai Lama cut a sorry figure in Hsining in 1909. The residence of Achia, destroyed by fire in 1895, was still not rebuilt in 1914, although all the materials for the reconstruction had been ready since 1909. The wood had been offered by the Tibetan Chief, Kach-htjir, and a contract had been written by the intendancy, promising Kach-htjir and his relatives the privilege of always staying at the residence, whenever they visited Kumbum.

Chao, the Living Buddha of Sia-mar, was a most celebrated man all over the country for his skill in patching up troubles, his unusual eloquence, proficiency in using the double-edged sword, of menaces and threats, soft words and blandishments. However, his influence lay in his cultivated acquaintance with the Chinese officials, to whom he paid visits and offered lavish gifts, and whom in due time he would use and provide with lawsuits that would benefit them. He was credited with having marvelous abilities and of being a powerful man. The saying went around that his special kind of intelligence weighed so heavily on one side of his body, that the soles of a new pair of shoes, after a few days, were always run down on the same side—the side where his intelligence was pressing the most.

He had obtained the office of chiliarch, the old privilege of judging the numerous tribes formerly subjected to his predecessors. He started abolishing, among his subjects, the smoking and planting of opium, with Draconian severity, and flogging and fining addicts of alcohol. He compelled the Chinese, to whom his subjects had transferred lands, to return the fields. Wherever there happened to be a festival, he pitched his tent and waited to render justice. Young women who had eloped and had been brought back by his retinue of

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twenty Tibetan soldiers, were flogged on such occasions in order to make a drastic example of them. Whenever people had a serious conflict, this Living Buddha was invited as arbitrator. He extended his zeal with prodigality, indulging his greedy fondness for display, and cultivating his reputation for knowing how to straighten out problems that seemed to be in a hopeless muddle. These activities absorbed all of his time and energy.

Cha-ik Hutukhtu followed in the wake of the Living Buddha of Siamar, building up his influence among the Chinese officials by means of gifts and visits, and by obtaining of the illustrious title Hutukhtu. He was never at home.

The Living Buddha Pu of Seerkok was fond of beautiful and fast horses. Every three days he participated in the morning races in the city of Hsining, riding his own horses in competition with the Moslems, who raised the best horses in the country. He was a better success at riding horses and breeding them than in philosophy and metaphysics; he was never seen in the temple.

The supreme chief of Seerkok, incarnation of the celebrated and learned Min-chu-erh, had a job at Nanking in the Bureau of Tibetan and Mongol affairs, but spent all of his spare time in Shanghai, indulging in expensive distractions and sorely depleting the funds of his intendancy. Back in Hsining, the community of the lamas stirred up trouble by not allowing him to return to the monastery, and preparing to bring suit against him at court, claiming that he was not the genuine incarnation. The T'u-kuan Hutukhtu told me in Man hui, Hou-t'ao, in 1940 that he had sent his intendant to Seerkok in order to avoid scandal and to smooth the ruffled feathers of the lamas, and that after several weeks, Min-chu-erh, his behavior having been on display in the city of Hsining, had succeeded in returning to Seerkok, protected by a retinue of thirty Moslem soldiers loaned by General Ma Erh-hsiang.

It was delightful to encounter once in a while a good Living Buddha, who was really loved by the people. In Hsien mi monastery the Goomang Buddha, an old man, was engaged all year long in making up packages containing medicine, on which he blew his blessings and which he distributed gratis to people who come from far away to receive them. It was a panacea, which healed all kind of diseases of men, women, and children.

Dealing with fasting rites for laymen, there will be recorded the example of a really outstanding Living Buddha, the old Li. Modest and unassuming, adored by the people, his preaching developed and revived the sense of religiosity and of justice and humanity. His beneficent influence radiated far beyond the circle of fasters, into families and the administration of villages. He was at that time, among the Living Buddhas, the only educator of the Monguors, a benefactor of the Monguor society.